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RUCQAAA/USCINCCENT INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KARACHI 000582

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SINDH - PML-N PLANS SINDH REORGANIZATION

REF: A. KARACHI 426

[1](#)B. KARACHI 477

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY CONSUL GENERAL KAY ANSKE, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Sindh Vice President of the Pakistan Muslim League) Nawaz (PML-N) told the Consul General (CG) on October 16 that his party plans to reorganize the Sindh provincial party structure. The restructured party will include some former Pakistan Muslim League (PML) politicians and members of influential families in its new leadership structure. The move is part of a strategy to gain more political influence in the province ahead of the 2009 local government elections. He also said that Shahbaz Sharif, brother of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, will promote greater provincial autonomy during a speech at a November 15 Council of Foreign Relations reception in Karachi. The Chief Ministers of all four of Pakistan's provinces are expected to attend the reception. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Sindh Pakistan Muslim League) Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Saleem Zia told the Consul General (CG) on October 16 that his party plans to make a concerted effort to gain influence in Sindh province. According to Zia, PML-N will hold party reorganization meetings in November to elect a slate of influential new leaders to carry the party into the 2009 local government elections. He said the party is currently conveying its plans to diplomats, politicians and business leaders to underscore its determination to increase the party's base.

[1](#)3. (C) Zia explained that PML-N's poor showing in the February 2008 Sindh provincial elections was caused, in part, by a lack of attention from national party leaders to the province. He also told the CG that the current PML-N Sindh leadership is dedicated but lacks the prestige or finances to successfully contest in elections. The party did not win a single National or Provincial Assembly seat from Sindh.

[1](#)4. (C) Zia noted that PML-N has recruited disaffected members of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) who can prove that they joined PML under duress and, subsequently, did not make public derogatory statements against PML-N or hold any high ranking position in the PML. While PML-N does not expect sweeping changes in its provincial leadership, he said the party plans to also include influential and well-heeled families from various areas in the province, such as the Jatois (from Dadu), the Chandios (from Larkana and Hyderabad), and the Shirazis (from Badin), in its new leadership structure.

Shabaz Sharif to Speak on Provincial Autonomy

15. (C) According to Zia, there is much discussion within party ranks that Nawaz and Shahbaz Sharif are directly responsible for the dismal showing of the PML-N in the February 2008 elections. According to the talk, party leadership neglected Sindh. The fact that neither Sharif brother visited Sindh during the campaign is seen as a prime example of the neglect of the province by the party. To remedy this, Shahbaz Sharif, brother of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, will visit Sindh Province more often, starting with a visit in mid-November. Nawaz Sharif will also visit Sindh at a later date. For the moment, Shahbaz Sharif is scheduled to speak in support of greater provincial autonomy at a November 15 Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations reception in Karachi. The Chief Ministers from all four of Pakistan's provinces are expected to attend the event.

16. (C) Comment: PML-N leaders appear to be positioning the party to take advantage of growing discontent, both from within and externally, with the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Internally, the PPP in Sindh is rife with dissention between those members who were close to Benazir Bhutto and those who are close to Asif Zardari. Externally, Karachi business leaders feel the PPP focused too much attention on restoring judges while ignoring a serious economic decline until it was almost too late. Business leaders and ordinary citizens have repeatedly told the CG that they are alarmed over a rise in violent crime. Many citizens also fear the possibility of a growing Taliban influence in the city caused by an increase in refugees from the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (reftels A and B).

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17. (C) Comment (continued): Although Post does not believe that PML-N will supplant PPP as the majority party in Sindh province, PML-N leaders may be attempting to counter PPP ambitions elsewhere by making a concentrated effort in Sindh province and forcing the PPP to dedicate resources to defend its own backyard. In a possible bid to expand its influence outside of its home base in Punjab, PML-N plans to voice support for greater provincial autonomy (a key Baloch demand) at an event that should include all four provincial Chief Ministers. The coming months will determine whether this gambit will pay off for PML-N.
Anske